FOREWORD

The effects of invasive vertebrate species on agriculture, human health and safety, and the environment are a growing concern around the world. The number of incidents of invasive species causing harm continues to climb with increased worldwide travel and transportation of goods. The focus for many decades was on invasive pathogens, plants, and invertebrates because they can greatly affect human and animal health and food supplies. In recent years, invasive vertebrate species, such as rats, feral pigs, and feral cats, have garnered more attention because the magnitude of their impacts have been repeatedly highlighted in the media. In response, better methods of prevention, detection, and management of invasive species have been developed. For example, several eradications of invasive vertebrates on islands have been successful, although management on mainland settings is generally much more challenging.

This volume is the outcome of an international symposium on managing vertebrate invasive species. The symposium was organized and sponsored by the National Wildlife Research Center of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services. The symposium was held in Fort Collins, Colorado, on August 7-9, 2007, and was attended by researchers, managers, agency and military personnel, academicians, private industry employees, and representatives of conservation groups and non-governmental organizations. Participants were from the United States, Canada, Chile, United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, as well as several island territories in the Pacific and Caribbean.

As readers will discover, presentations, both oral and poster, were wide-ranging in their coverage of species and problem situations. Plenary speakers set the stage with their talks on the scale of the issue, national and international perspectives, and global initiatives. Other speakers addressed public education, economics, and invasion prevention. These were followed by sessions organized by taxonomic groups: reptiles and amphibians, rodents, other mammals, and birds and multiple species. Speakers represented a wealth of knowledge and experience, and we saw an impressive exchange of ideas and substantial collaboration-building.

We hope this proceedings will serve not only as an overview of the current knowledge about vertebrate invasive species and method and strategy development, but also as a catalyst and guide for future research and management in this rapidly growing area of wildlife damage management. We look forward to the development and practical application of new prevention, detection, management and eradication methods and strategies, and foresee an increasing reliance on these emerging wildlife management tools derived from partnerships among academic, governmental, and private sectors.

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